



received
JUN 13 2000

State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
HEALTH/ AGRICULTURE BUILDING
JOHN FITCH PLAZA
PO BOX 330
TRENTON NJ 08625-0330

CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN
Governor

ARTHUR R. BROWN, JR.
Secretary

June 12, 2000

Honorable Daniel Glickman
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
14th & Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0105

Dear Secretary Glickman:

Because of the dire situation facing the cranberry industry, I am requesting that you approve the volume regulation as requested by the Cranberry Marketing Committee at their June 6 meeting. A quick decision is necessary if growers are to make appropriate decisions concerning the production of this year's crop, and I urge you to do so in a timely fashion.

As you are aware, cranberries are an important crop in New Jersey. A series of record high cranberry yields and soft demand has resulted in an estimated three million plus barrel surplus by the close of harvest this fall. Industry inventories have doubled in the past two years driving down cranberry prices to growers by as much as two-thirds. It is estimated that approximately 80% of all growers are now producing at or below the cost of production. Without quick action, grower prices are projected to fall further still.

Referencing my April 6 and May 2 letters to you, I am again requesting that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) become more aggressive in its domestic and overseas marketing efforts. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture is the only state department of agriculture to administer the Cooperative Child Nutrition programs as well as the Food Distribution Commodity Programs. These programs direct federal dollars for the purchase of approved food products (such as school lunch) or directly purchase surplus commodities (the "bonus" program) for distribution to a variety of targeted audiences. Therefore, I am requesting that the USDA list such processed products as sweetened dried cranberries and frozen cranberries as reimbursable commodities, and products such as cranberry sauce and cranberry juice cocktail concentrate be purchased for distribution through various other USDA feeding programs. These products, containing sufficient quantities of cranberries, will make this healthy food available to our target audiences. These measures will help in the short run.

As a long term measure, I suggest that the Foreign Cranberry Promotion sub-committee evaluate the feasibility of a domestic generic promotion program for cranberries, along the lines of our hugely successful Jersey Fresh multi-media marketing campaign. Long term. Short term. We must all work together in coming to the aid of this very important agricultural industry.

Sincerely,

Arthur R. Brown, Jr.